Preface

OVERVIEW

Online learning began slowly in the 1990’s because it lacked the technology and university acceptance needed to make it successful. When these issues were remedied, distance learning exploded, literally sweeping across developed nations. Today in countries like the United States online learning is so pervasive that the very notion of university service areas has become an anachronism. Online learning in just two decades transformed from a teaching novelty into a major funding source for universities.

The next evolutionary step, transnational distance learning, or online learning across national borders, has already begun, and it will develop more quickly than that of its predecessor because it will benefit from technological advances and acceptance of online learning. Faltering national economies are the fuel for transnational distance learning. Distance-learning universities in developed countries look to transnational distance learning to generate more income and reduce teaching costs.

Universities contemplating the transnational distance markets may recognize their past online mistakes, but that does not guarantee they will learn from them. There is but a brief window of opportunity as competitors vie for market share. The transnational distance-learning prize, as in the previous online era, will go to the fleet of foot. Universities that hesitate will lose out.

RELEVANCY

This text discusses prior mistakes universities made in assessing the viability of online learning. It discusses solutions, and what it takes to create a successful transnational distance-learning program. The book provides guidelines and case studies to assist universities decide whether transnational distance learning is appropriate for them. If the answer is yes, the text reviews potential markets, opportunities, and challenges.

Transnational distance learning is at this moment at the same stage online learning was in the 1990’s, but already the market demand is much greater. Developing countries understand the need to educate more of their populations to compete in the global economy. Online deliverers understand the potential transnational distance learning has to increase enrollment, diversity, and international reputation. The Internet continues to improve in emerging nations, making higher education more accessible and affordable. Transnational distance learning opens the door to universally accessible and acceptable higher education.
The historical record in developing countries confirms the need to move education online. After half a century of face-to-face and distance-learning delivery by correspondence courses, untrained teachers remain untrained, and much of population remains uneducated in emerging nations in Asia, Africa, and the Pacific. This text assists universities to understand the opportunities, issues, and ways forward. Caution is good, but speed is essential.

What makes this text especially relevant is its global perspective. Universities in India, Indonesia, Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States present strikingly different perspectives of accreditation, teaching preferences, delivery modes, and culture. Chapter 5 demonstrates how university students can have very different perspectives. In this chapter, six students from developed and emerging countries describe their experiences, both good and bad. The book also presents unique case studies of online teaching experiences involving culturally diverse students in global virtual classrooms. Chapter 6 describes a new online phenomenon, online incivility, which could become a major issue in multicultural online classrooms.

Teaching online is desirable, but only if the technology is adequate. Section 3 of this text discusses exciting developments in educational technology and related transnational distance learning opportunities in developing nations. Chapter 15 describes a bold project in the Pacific to provide professional development training for public health workers. The last book section contains a single chapter, "How to be a Transnational Distance Learning Winner." This chapter begins with an in-depth description of the essential elements of strategic planning, then progresses through each step, demonstrating how to create a successful transnational distance-learning program, and concludes with a Transnational Distance Learning IQ test.

TARGET AUDIENCE

This text is written for university administrators, accrediting and governmental agencies, online teachers, course designers, ITC professionals, and researchers. University presidents and senior administrators will find this information valuable to make informed decisions. Finance officers will equally find the text helpful because it addresses cost options and issues.

CHAPTER IMPORTANCE

Chapter 1: Succeeding in Transnational Distance Learning by Robert Hogan, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

The interplay of new technology, reduced finances, increasing competition, and educational needs—all forecast the coming boom of transnational distance learning. This chapter discusses past trends in online learning and opportunities to benefit from future directions in distance learning.
Chapter 2: The Why and How of Transnational Teaching: A University of South Africa Perspective by Narend Baijnath, University of South Africa, South Africa

Developing countries face the challenge of increasing educational access to higher education in ways that are affordable, successful, and sustainable. This chapter discusses the militating factors that must be addressed, if this potential is to be fully realized.

Chapter 3: Open and Distance Learning in Asia: A Case Study by Tian Belawati, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia; Udan Kusmawan, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia; Suci M. Isman, Universitas Terbuka, Indonesia

This is a case study of the Universitas Terbuka, which has an enrollment of 600,000 students. The chapter discusses the limited ICT infrastructure, other issues, and future directions to use technology to improve access to quality a education.

Chapter 4: Distance Learning Challenges Facing Two World Regional Universities by Sandra Sookram, The University of the West Indies Trinidad and Tobago; Robert Hogan, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

This case study of two regional universities—the University of the West Indies and the University of the South Pacific—discusses distance-learning history, current practices, and future directions. The chapter also discusses opportunities, as well as the increasing competition from foreign online universities. Other topics include political issues and cultural/pedagogical challenges.

Chapter 5: Transnational Distance Learning: A Student Perspective by Awenesh Singh, University of Toulouse, France; Glen Cochrane, Athabasca University, Canada; Zeynep Uyar, Middle East Technical University, Cyprus; Chetan More, Jaipuria Institute of Management, India; Joseph Scarcella, Luzerne Community College, USA; Kento Yoshida, Suzuka National College of Technology, Japan; Jalal Mohammed, Fiji National University, Fiji

This chapter describes the online educational experiences of students in both emerging and developed countries around the world. The authors are from France, Japan, India, Cyprus, Canada, the United States, and Fiji. This cross-section presents a global view of student needs for transnational education.

Chapter 6: Online Student Incivility: What It is and How to Manage It by Renate Prescott, Kent State University, USA

Student incivility in the online classroom is a new issue. Cultural changes in Western countries are impacting the virtual classroom, but this issue remains largely unaddressed. Incivility, like a virus, will spread to the transnational distance-learning virtual classroom. This chapter offers strategies to address uncivil online student behavior.
Chapter 7: Teaching Arabic Online: Methods to Interact with and Engage Students by Arifa Garman, Gulf Coast State College, USA

Teaching Arabic online comes with a special set of challenges and opportunities. This chapter describes the technology and teaching methods used to make the study of Arabic a transnational reality.

Chapter 8: Internationalization of Indian Higher Education by Sunil Kumar, Indira Gandhi National Open University, India

Transnational distance learning involves the import and export of educational materials and courses. This chapter discusses India’s plan to be a major power throughout Asia, Africa, and North America.

Chapter 9: Distance Learning in the Pacific: A Case Study of American Samoa by Deborah Zuercher, University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA; Jon Yoshioka, University of Hawaii at Manoa, USA

The chapter discusses the transnational distance-learning partnership between the University of Hawaii at Manoa and the American Samoa Department of Education, providing insight into the context, methods, issues, solutions and recommendations involved in extending university teacher education across national borders.

Chapter 10: Open Educational Resources: The Impact of MERLOT on Transnational Distance Education by Lynn Aaron, SUNY Rockland Community College, USA; Laura Franklin, Northern Virginia Community College, USA; Jeanne P. Sewell, Georgia College and State University, USA

This chapter discusses the impact of MERLOT open educational resources (OERs) on transnational education. MERLOT presents an international perspective on solutions, recommendations, futures directions, and conclusions.

Chapter 11: Using Alternative Technologies for Teacher Training in Developing Countries by Victoria L. Frank, Seward Corporation, USA

In this chapter, the author discusses how developing countries are using innovative educational technology when Internet connectivity or electricity is not dependable. The chapter also discusses how these methods can be used to improve teacher training where Internet and electricity are not a given.

Chapter 12: Teaching Teachers: The Biggest Educational Challenge in Sub-Saharan Africa by Robert Moon, Open University, UK

Existing institutionally based systems for educating and training teachers in Sub Saharan Africa have not kept up with present demand, nor can they hope to meet future needs. This chapter discusses the use of Open Educational Resources (OER) and how they can be a partial solution to the needs of developing countries.
Chapter 13: Developing Cultural Competency in Engineering through Transnational Distance Learning
by Stephanie Moore, University of Virginia, USA; Dominik May, Universität Dortmund, Germany; Kari Wold, University of Virginia, USA

In this case study, engineering students participated in a transnational distance-learning activity that was designed to create multicultural collaboration and assessment without having to travel abroad.

Chapter 14: Globalization of Higher Education: An Indian Perspective by Suresh K. Chauhan, Jaiipuria Institute of Management, India; Silima Nanda, Indira Gandhi Open University, India; Jagdish Arora, INFLIBNET, India

India has one of the largest and most complex higher educational systems in the world. This chapter discusses the global shift toward transnational distance learning and India’s role in this transition.

Chapter 15: The Pacific Open Learning Health Net: Providing Health Education in the Pacific by Steven Baxendale, World Health Organization, Fiji

The quality of health education in the Pacific region has always suffered because of the vast distances and the limited technology. This chapter discusses recent educational advances that are improving the quality of health professions across Oceania.

Chapter 16: How to be a Transnational Distance Learning Winner by Robert Hogan, University of the South Pacific, Fiji

Strategic planning, management, assessment, and marketing are needed to maximize opportunities and minimize risk. The chapter discusses these topics, as well as course design, pedagogy, and faculty selection. Other topics include business models, and marketing strategies. It concludes with an Appendix, a Transnational Distance-Learning IQ Test, by Robert Hogan.

This text is written to be a practical guide on how to implement Transnational Distance Learning (TDL). The TDL (IQ) Test gauges your readiness to go global.

CONCLUSION

National online learning is going global. The opportunities are enormous at a time when transnational distance learning is most needed. It is the future of education. The transnational distance-learning train is set to leave the station. However, there are risks, and universities should consider carefully before climbing aboard. Cross-border is good business, opening global markets to universities. This text is structured to assist universities to be successful, and each chapter has been carefully aligned with this theme.

It is the editor’s hope that this text is a significant contribution to the emerging field of transnational distance learning.

Robert Hogan
University of the South Pacific, Fiji